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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: DECEMBER 01, 2009

Summary: A Washington Post's report that U.S. President Obama "offered Pakistan an enhanced strategic partnership," but warning to "take action against militants along border if Islamabad fails" dominated headlines in several major newspapers on Tuesday. However, daily "The News," and its mass-circulation sister Urdu paper, "Jang," quoted U.S. media reports as claiming that the Obama administration fears the collapse of President Zardari's government. It was widely reported that President Obama will announce his Afghan strategy today (Tuesday). All newspapers highlighted the U.S. Senate's report that "Usama Bin Laden was 'within the grasp' of the U.S. forces in late 2001, but escaped because then-Defense Secretary Rumsfeld rejected calls for reinforcement." British Prime Minister Brown's remarks that "Pakistanis know whereabouts of Usama and Zawahiri" and Pakistani Prime Minister Gilani's rejoinder that "UBL (is) not in Pakistan, and that Islamabad would act if the U.K. and U.S. share actionable information about his whereabouts" received prominent display. Commenting on the subject, "The Nation," advised the Pakistani authorities to "take serious exception to the British Premier Brown who has been haranguing them for their failure to capture Usama and his deputy Zawahiri..." End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: U.S. Offers Enhanced Strategic Ties To Pakistan "Dawn" (12/01)

"U.S. President Barack Obama has reportedly offered Pakistan an enhanced strategic partnership, including additional cooperation in military and economic fields, the U.S. media reported on Monday. Obama made the offer in a two-page letter to President Asif Ali Zardari as a move to ease tension between Islamabad and Washington. U.S. National Security Adviser Gen. James Jones, who delivered the letter to Zardari in Islamabad last week, warned the Pakistanis 'with unusual bluntness' that their 'use of insurgent groups to pursue policy goals cannot continue', The Washington Post reported." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: U.S. Fears Zardari's Collapse "The News" (12/01)

"The Obama administration is seriously worried about the fast weakening grip of President Asif Zardari in Pakistan and on Monday two top U.S. newspapers predicted, in powerful reports by seven leading writers and correspondents that the Zardari regime seemed to be near collapse. The New York Times in a report filed by five correspondents said: 'The problems in Afghanistan have only been compounded by the fragility of Mr. Obama's partner in Pakistan, President Asif Ali Zardari, who is so weak that his government seems

near collapse.' The Washington Post in a report by two correspondents said: 'Zardari's political weakness is an additional hazard for a new bilateral relationship. The administration expects Zardari's position to continue to weaken, leaving him as a largely ceremonial president even if he manages to survive in office.'" (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Obama Briefs Allies On New Afghan Strategy "The News" (12/01)

"President Barack Obama on Monday was prepared to announce he will deploy about 30,000 more U.S. troops to Afghanistan as part of a new strategy that will stress a U.S. intention to ultimately exit the country. After three months of deliberations, Obama is to outline his plans in an address to the American people on Tuesday. Obama told U.S. military commanders on Sunday that he had settled on a new plan and issued them the orders to carry it out, the White House said. He also held a meeting to inform top advisers of his decision." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: War Strategy: Obama Calls Zardari, World Leaders "Dawn" (12/01)

"President Asif Ali Zardari is among a handful of world leaders U.S. President Barack Obama telephoned on Monday, a day before launching his much-awaited policy for the Pak-Afghan region. The first person Mr. Obama called was French President Nicolas Sarkozy, followed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. In South Asia, the U.S. President spoke with Mr. Zardari and his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai. White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs, while confirming that Mr. Obama spoke to these leaders, said the U.S. President only discussed a broad outline of his policy with them. He was 'not overly specific.'"

News Story: Rumsfeld Decision Allowed Usama To Escape "Dawn" (12/01)

"Usama bin Laden was 'within the grasp' of U.S. forces in late 2001 but escaped because then defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld rejected calls for reinforcements, a U.S. Senate report says. Dated for release on Monday, the hard-hitting study comes as President Barack Obama prepares to announce a major escalation of the Afghan conflict, now in its ninth year, with the expected deployment of some 34,000 more U.S. troops." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: Pakistanis Know Whereabouts Of Usama, Zawahri: Brown "Daily Times" (12/01)

"British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has called on Pakistan to take tougher action against Al Qaeda and step up its efforts to track down the group's leader, and hinted that people in Pakistan are aware of the whereabouts of Usama Bin Laden and his second-in-command, Ayman Al-Zawahri. 'Brown ... [has] expressed support for what Pakistani forces are doing against the Taliban, but ... [he] wants to see tougher action against the leadership of Al Qaeda,' said a British official."

News Story: Usama Not In Pakistan: Gilani "The News" (12/01)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has rejected reports about presence of Usama bin Laden in Pakistan, saying Islamabad would act if the U.K. and the U.S. share actionable intelligence information about his whereabouts, he said while talking to newsmen on board his special plane from Islamabad to Berlin on Monday." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Don't Make Statements On Usama's Location "Daily Times" (12/01)

"The Foreign Office called on the international community - especially the U.K. not to make statements on the whereabouts of Usama Bin Laden, and instead share credible intelligence, if any, on the location of the Al Qaeda leader. Commenting on a statement by the U.K. Prime Minister, FO spokesman Abdul Basit told a private TV channel that nobody should doubt Pakistan's efforts to eliminate

terrorism."

News Story: Army, Air Chiefs Visit Wana "The News" (12/01)

"Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani visited Makeen and Wana to celebrate Eid with troops engaged in operations in South Waziristan. Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Rao Qamar Suleman also accompanied the COAS. During informal interaction with troops the COAS appreciated their morale and congratulated them on successful conduct of operations. He also lauded the cooperation and support extended by Pakistan Air Force in this regard. The COAS said that the sacrifices being made by army personnel reflected their resolve and commitment to rid the country of the menace of terrorism." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: 13 Militants Killed In Kurram, SWA "The News" (12/01)

"Thirteen militants were killed and 14 others sustained injuries in fighting between the security forces and militants in Kurram and South Waziristan tribal regions on Monday, military officials in Kurram Agency said."

News Story: Army Says Operation To Be Extended To Kurram "The News" (12/01)

"The ongoing operation in Khyber and Orakzai tribal regions will be extended to neighboring Kurram Agency to crush militants and miscreants. Briefing reporters about the operation 'Khwah Ba De Sham' (I will fix you) at Fort Salop camp on Monday, Sector Commander Brigadier Fayyaz Mehmood said that 61 militants had been killed and 87 arrested while 27 vehicles owned by insurgents were destroyed during the ongoing operation in Bara tehsil of Khyber tribal region so far."

News Story: 12 Suspects Released In Swat "The News" (12/01)

"The security forces released 12 suspected persons, picked up from different areas of Swat district, on the occasion of Eidul Azha. Sources said that dozens of suspects were released after security forces interrogated and cleared them. The names of the suspects were not disclosed to the media."

Editorial: The Haranguing Brown, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (12/01)

"As the misnamed war on terror has brought home to the people of this region and beyond, Britain is never found wanting in toeing the American line, unquestionably. It was precisely for his studious pursuit of the policies that George W. Bush adopted, that Tony Blair was termed as his poodle by his own people. In a similar fashion, the Pakistan authorities ought to take serious exception to the present U.K. Prime Minister Gordon Brown who has been haranguing them for their failure to capture Usama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman Al-Zawahiri.... Mr. Brown should be listening to Shadow Defence Secretary Liam Fox who counseled the international community to give Pakistan a lot of help because it 'does not really have the capabilities for the sort of anti-terrorist measures that we want.'"

Editorial: British Prime Minister's Statement About Pakistan And Ground Realities, an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (12/01)

"With a view to conceal their military defeat in Afghanistan, the Britain and the United States have, once again, started baseless propaganda against Pakistan. When will this continual demand for 'do more' from Washington and its NATO allies be stopped? We think that it is right time for our rulers to review their policies in order to protect the national prestige, security and sovereignty of Pakistan."

Editorial: America, Britain Should Improve Performance In Afghanistan" an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (12/01)

"Following the footsteps of former U.S. President Bush and his successor Obama the British Prime Minister Brown has called upon Pakistan to do more for arresting Usama bin Laden and his

accomplices.... Prime Minister Brown has also said that America did not do anything to get a clue of Usama in the last eight years.... How Pakistan could be blamed for America's failure to locate its enemies."

Editorial: Gordon Brown Further Humiliates Britons, an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (12/01)

"The demand of Gordon Brown from Pakistan to do more is in direct conflict with the ground realities and the emerging scenario. Britain has long been holding dialogue with Taliban and now there are confirmed reports that the United States too was engaged in secret talks with Taliban in a bid to find a way out. Then why to ask Pakistan, which has already contributed over one hundred thousand troops and has rendered more sacrifices than the combined losses of the allied forces, to do more. Similarly, if the United States and Britain could not locate Usama and his men during the last eight years despite possession of the globe's latest technology and gadgets, then how can Pakistan do the job with rudimentary technology and equipment?"

Editorial: Beginning of A New Drama Against Pakistan, an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (12/01)

"Instead of accepting defeat in Afghanistan, the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, in its latest report, has observed that Usama Bin Laden is hiding in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Under these circumstances, Pakistan must make it clear to the entire world that it will no longer succumb to unwarranted pressure and insult. It is the need of the hour for us to review our policies of cooperating with U.S. and other allied countries, and depending upon them for financial assistance."

Editorial: Afghan Dilemma, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/01)

"The Prime Minister has suggested in an interview that an increase in U.S. troop numbers in Afghanistan could bring problems for Pakistan because militants may escape across the border into the country.... The war should not be a question of driving the militants away but of ensuring they are defeated wherever they are based. At present, there is little doubt in the eyes of the world that it is in Pakistan and Afghanistan that the headquarters of militancy lie. There is a great deal to gain from altering this perception. To achieve this Afghanistan and Pakistan need to work together.... There have, from time to time, been accusations and counter-accusations. But both countries must realize that the need for combating terror must take precedence over all else."

Editorial: Formulate U.S.-Afghan Policy After Debate in Public, Parliament, an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (12/01)

"Despite the incessant failures of the NATO forces, and the gradual rise in the Taliban's influence, the Obama administration has decided to send more troops to Afghanistan which would directly and adversely affect the stability of Pakistan. We think that the government should formulate a comprehensive national policy on the Afghan issue after open debates in universities, Parliament and other forums."

Editorial: Time To Begin Dialogue, an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (12/01)

"According to reports, Washington has started negotiations with the Taliban whom it has had declared terrorists. It means that every issue can be resolved through dialogue. The U.S. does not feel any qualms in talking to its enemies therefore Pakistan, which is the greatest victim of the Afghan war, should also hold negotiations with its own."

Opinion: Look At Gordon Brown, an op-ed by Azam Khalil in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (12/01)

"The British Prime Minister Mr. Gordon Brown is not even a

reflection of glory of his predecessor Tony Blair.... The latest example of poor British diplomacy came in the shape of an outburst by the British prime minister when he demanded that Pakistan should do more to break Al Qaeda and try to capture its leader Mr. Usama bin Laden.... These remarks of the British Prime Minister have come at a time when a Congressional Committee of the United States has released the report admitting that it was the failure on the part of the United States of not apprehending or killing Usama bin Laden in the year 2001 when he (Usama) left the caves of Tora Bora in Afghanistan. Perhaps Mr. Gordon Brown wants to pull out his troops from Afghanistan where their performance has been classified as poor by the concerned commanders and in doing so the British Prime Minister wants to blame Pakistan for the failure of his army to discharge their duties for which they were sent to Afghanistan as a part of NATO forces.... Therefore, keeping in view the ground realities of the present insurgency and the attitude of both the British and American administrations, it is extremely unfair for the British Prime Minister to demand from Pakistan that it should commit more forces against elements of Al Qaeda."

Opinion: Blackwater: Another Aspect, an op-ed by Huma Yusuf in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/01)

"Until now, Pakistani ire against Blackwater has mostly been ensconced in anti-America rhetoric. But by exclusively framing the problem as such, we're neglecting to consider one dimension of the mercenary business that could have profound implications on how Pakistan conducts its war against terrorism.... In the absence of a robust legal framework that can deal justly and proportionately with terrorists, extrajudicial killings will remain an attractive option for stakeholders in the war against terrorism. In that event, Blackwater operatives, or the employees of other private security firms, working with the U.S. and/or Pakistani militaries and intelligence agencies, will have cause to launch secret programs in Pakistan. And as long as that happens, Taliban spokesmen will continue to find a scapegoat for their heinous attacks, winning public sympathy while pinning their crimes on other 'non-state actors.'"

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: India Not Sincere About Talks, Says Gilani "Dawn" (12/01)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said in Berlin on Monday that India was not sincere in resuming composite dialogue with Pakistan, adding that attempts by Pakistan to normalize relations between the two countries were being stalled. 'India is stalling the dialogue process and the European Union must play its role to bring it back to the negotiating table for resolving all outstanding issues, including the core issue of Kashmir, between the two countries,' Prime Minister Gilani said during a meeting with German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, soon after arriving on a two-day visit." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

Editorial: Iran-America Dispute And Regional Peace, an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (12/01)

"Although Iran had been flexible vis-à-vis its nuclear policy, it is also true that Iran's recent statements on enhancing its nuclear program has increased the tension and further fueled the fire.... In order to improve the situation Iran should avoid issuing unnecessary statements and America and its allies should avoid putting unnecessary pressure on Iran by talking of more economic sanctions against the country."

Editorial: Nuclear Hazards, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/01)

"The recent incident in Karnataka, India, where 50 workers were exposed to radiation at a nuclear power plant is an instance of how hazardous nuclear power can be. The Indian authorities have downplayed last week's happening as "mischief" and not an accident. But that hardly detracts from the dangers of nuclear power.... What needs to be noted is that each of the three accidents occurred in a developed country where precautionary measures are supposed to be stringent. Yet they could not escape the dangers posed by mechanical

failures and carelessness in following safety protocols."

Opinion: Obama in China, an op-ed by Shahid Javed Burki in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/01)

"If there were any doubts that the global economic and political order was being reshaped they were set aside by the outcome of President Barack Obama's recently concluded three-day visit to China. That was the high point of the nine-day trip to Asia. It has great significance in terms of charting a new course for American diplomacy not only in Asia but in the world. By moving to grant China an equal status, President Obama moved light years away from the approach adopted by President George W. Bush, his predecessor."

Opinion: Pomp And Substance, an op-ed by Dr. Maleeha Lodhi in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/01)

"Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Washington did not produce any big-ticket agreement or show-stopping announcement. But it reinforced the growing strategic relationship between the two countries.... Islamabad will also have to weigh the likely impact on regional stability of U.S. military sales to India, especially in the context of aggressive pronouncements by Indian military leaders about 'cold start' and 'limited war' doctrines. The Singh visit may not have yielded all that the Indians wanted from it because of their unrealistic set of expectations. But several aspects of solidifying U.S.-India ties have ramifications for Pakistan that will need to be carefully evaluated. A hard-headed appraisal must be conducted in the context of renewed American requests for Islamabad's cooperation to implement Obama's new strategy in Afghanistan. It must also be undertaken from the perspective of the country's broader strategic vision, especially future relations with its abiding strategic partner, China."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: What Led To Change Of N-Command? "The News" (12/01)

"The change of hands in controlling the National Command Authority (NCA) of Pakistan's vital strategic assets on the day when the notorious National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) operation ceased to exist for good will have far-reaching implications on the power structure of the country. It is a demonstration of complete mistrust in the hands from which the authority has been withdrawn and expression of confidence in the person who has assumed it. It is a first reshuffle in Pakistan's commandant control authority of the strategic assets ever since its inception nine years ago. The authority that deals with domestic system of Pakistan's invaluable strategic assets has the most obvious external dimensions."

News Story: President To Give Up Powers Within Weeks "The News" (12/01)

"President Asif Zardari has finally made up his mind to become a titular head, or in common parlance a Rafiq Tarar, by also relinquishing even the most vital discretionary power to appoint services chiefs and the joint chiefs of staff committee chairman, his close aides say. Federal ministers, who frequently interact with him, say the president has left no doubt in discussions with us that he is ready to give up the discretionary authority to nominate services chiefs and dissolve the National Assembly and dismiss the government under Article 58(2)b of the Constitution in favor of the Prime Minister."

News Story: Zardari Not To Re-Promulgate NRO: Spokesman "Dawn" (12/01)

"President's spokesman Farhatullah Babar confirms President Asif Zardari will not re-promulgate the NRO after it lapsed on Nov 28. Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira says that its the court's call now and that the government will accept whatever the verdict. Kaira said during the reign of former President Pervez Musharraf, PPP had demanded the return of the exile leaders and lifting the ban on becoming prime minister for the third time." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

Editorial: NCA Chairmanship, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/01)

"We do not know what prompted the president to tinker with the National Command Authority (NCA). Perhaps because it has no real impact on the de facto nuclear power structure (the CJCS, Director General of the Strategic Plans Division and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) are believed to be the decision-making linchpins in the NCA), the president considered it politically beneficial to 'give away' some of his powers. But it is an impulse he should have resisted. What the country really needs is a reversion to the parliamentary and federal character of the original constitution, and that's where the president's energies should be directed."

Editorial: Not Enough, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/01)

"It seems quite evident that the decision to give up control of the National Command Authority is rooted in the need to release some of the mounting pressure. The President will be hoping his action will appease the forces alienated from him - and at least buy him some time. It is unlikely this will happen. Too much time has gone by; too much has happened through the past weeks and months. Gestures are no longer enough. People seek genuine change and patience is fast running out. An immediate undoing of the 17th Amendment would make some impact. Merely fiddling with existing legislation means nothing. After all, command of the National Command Authority (NCA), beyond a symbol of authority, means little in practical terms. However, the action on the eve of Eid does show us that the president is possibly panicking. The mounting pressure seems then to be taking its toll. Mr. Zardari appears desperate to save himself. But unfortunately he still seems not to have realized that concrete measures will be required to do so. Flimsy, half-hearted actions will lead us nowhere at all."

Editorial: Presidency & NCA, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (12/01)

"Ironically, the pressure from all quarters has been for the Presidency to return the political powers grabbed from the Prime Minister by the previous dictatorial dispensation. So the question now is whether the President has made a beginning with the relinquishing of the National Command Authority (NCA) chairmanship and will move to give up on the political powers and rectify constitutional distortions, or whether he is using the NCA issue as a diversion, while holding on to those political powers? Strange dichotomies are being created within our democratic structures as well as in our sensitive organizations - purely because of one individual's obduracy."

Editorial: Transfer of Command and Control Authority to Prime Minister, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (12/01)

"This is a welcome development that progress has been made towards strengthening of democratic system, in line with the Charter of Democracy, and the President has given up the powers of the Command and Control Authority.... Now that President Asif Ali Zardari has relinquished the Command and Control Authority in favor of the Prime Minister, he should also repeal dictatorial constitutional provisions including 58-2 (B)."

ECON/BUSINESS

News Story: Pakistan Gets Only \$345m of \$1.61bn World Bank Pledge "Dawn" (12/01)

"Pakistan has received only \$345 million of the \$1.61 billion commitments made by two agencies of the World Bank for 2009. Also, of the total commitment of \$6.266 billion for 2004-09, an amount of \$1.456 billion in net terms was transferred to Pakistan, according to the annual report of the World Bank for 2009."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson